Rulers the Miniſters of GOD

FOR

the Good of their People.

A

SERMON

Preached before His EXCELLENCY

WILLIAM BURNET Eſq;

The Honourable the Lieu. GOVERNOUR, the Council and Repreſentatives of the Province of the *Maſſachuſetts-Bay* in *New-England*, *May* 28. 1729.

Being the Day for the Election of His Majeſty's COUNCIL.

By *Jeremiah Wiſe*, M. A. &c
Paſtor to a Church of Chriſt in *Berwick*.

Luke 22. 25. ——*And they that exerciſe Authority upon them, are called Benefactors.*

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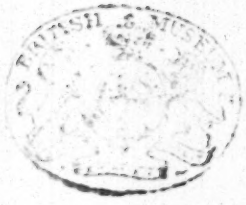

Advertiſement.

THE Reader is deſir'd to take Notice, that ſeveral Paragraphs were omitted in Preaching.

RULERS the Miniſters of GOD FOR The Good of their People.

ROM. XIII. 4.

For He is the Miniſter of GOD to thee for Good.

THE *beſt* Conſtitution of *civil Government* will not *alone* make a People *happy*, without a *wiſe* and *juſt* Adminiſtration: A ſteady *View* and *Aim* in the *Rulers*, at the *publick Good*, and a vigorous application of the *Means* conducive to that *End*, which requires *Union* amongſt themſelves, in their Counſels and Deſign, and a Concurrence of the *People* with them therein; who can't be made *Happy*, without their own *Conſent*. Such an *Union* of Counſels, and Deſign, ſuch a *Concurrence* in the uſe of proper means, will have a natural *Tendency*, to the Proſperity, the flouriſhing Circumſtances of ſuch a *People*; *whoſe Peace, by this means, may become like a River, and their Righteouſneſs like the Waves of the Sea.* Of ſuch a People it may be ſaid, as the Prophet ſpeaks of *Jeruſalem* ‖,

‖ Pſal. 122. 3.

They

They are as a City builded up, and compact together; and the Words in a following verſe †, may be taken up, as a Prediction; *Peace will be within their Walls*, i. e. within their Borders, *and Proſperity within their Palaces*. That *Land* may be accounted already *happy*, whoſe *Rulers* are like the *Heads* of *Iſſachar*, *having Underſtanding in the Times, to know what Iſrael ought to do*, and are agreed in the proper, *Methods* that tend to the *general Weal*; *and their Brethren are at their Commandment* *; ready to do what is *juſt* and *fit*, in order to the compaſſing that *End*: whoſe *Magiſtrates*, are juſtly ſtiled their *Benefactors*, *Miniſters of GOD to them for Good*; And the *People* love to have it ſo; are *eaſy* and *quiet* under their Adminiſtration; pleas'd with their *Conduct*; ſubject to their *Authority*; and are willing honourably to *ſupport* them. *Happy is the People, that is in ſuch a Caſe*; *Yea happy is that People whoſe GOD is the LORD. For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, and he will ſave us.*

The Apoſtle *Paul*, the Author of this divine *Epiſtle*, which was written to the *Chriſtians* living in *Rome*; charges them, tho' they liv'd under a *Heathen Government*, to be ſubject to it; to behave themſelves quietly and peaceably in the ſtate; and to *pay* their *Rates* and *Taxes* readily towards the *Support* of the Government: Becauſe that as Government in general, is of a divine *Original*, and the *Powers* that be, are Ordained of God, for the *Good*, of the People; ſo they that receive the *Benefit*, and enjoy the *Protection* of the Government, (which they might expect, upon their good Behaviour) are oblidg'd in point of Duty and Gratitude, ſo to behave themſelves: and if they were otherwiſe *affected* to their *Rulers*; were trouble-

† v. 7. * 1 Chron. 12. 32.

ſome

ſome and difficult to the *State*; ſtir'd up Factions and Rebellion, they would gain the Diſpleaſure of their *Superiours*, and *expoſe* themſelves to the *Penal Laws*, which would be *executed* on them with *Severity*. And beſides they would become obnoxious to the *Wrath* of God, who would be reflected on, by ſuch a *Reſiſtance*; and would become a *Party* in the Cauſe, and be Oblig'd to vindicate the *Honour* of his own *Name*, upon them. This is the ſubſtance of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe, in the *ſeven firſt Verſes*.

In the Words of the *Text*, we have one of the Reaſons, the Apoſtle gives, for this ſubjection to Civil Authority, taken from the *next End* and *great Benefit* of Government; which is the *Good* of the *Subject*. *For he is the Miniſter of God to thee for Good.* The Word [*for*] connects *theſe* with the foregoing *Words*; but I ſhall not Conſider them in reference to the *Context*, but only in themſelves; which I ſhall briefly *explain*, and then name the *Doctrine* from them.

He] that is, the *Power* or *Ruler* before mentioned in the third *verſe*, of whom the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks when he would tell us, the *End* the *Civil Ruler* is appointed for; which is not to be a *Terror* to *good Works*, but to the *Evil*.

He is the Miniſter] This *Word*, is a Title of *Office*, *Service*, or *Adminiſtration*, and the Original Word ſignifies a painful and laborious *Miniſtry* or *Service*, wherein Men take pains, labour, and even *ſweat* as thoſe, that make haſte in Travel, raiſing the Duſt, with their celerity and ſpeed †. This Title then, implies Work and Buſineſs, proper to this Office.

† Leigh. Par. in Corum.

Rule

Rule and *Government* has it's *Burthen* as well as *Honour*.

He is the Miniſter of God] Not only in a *large ſenſe* as other Men are his *Miniſters* or *Servants*; but in an *appropriate ſenſe*, as other Men are not. He is *the Miniſter*, by way of *Eminency*; the *Miniſter of God*, and ſtands related *to him*, as the GOD of *Order* and ſupream Rule and Authority, to whom, all *Power* Originally belongs, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice*; who are his *Agents*, or Vice-gerents here upon *Earth*, whom he *Ordains*, *Qualifies* and *Advances* to their high and honourable *Stations*; that they may be ſerviceable in the World; and by his Providence, he *removes* 'em from their high Seats as he pleaſes; who will *call* them to a ſtrict Account, at laſt, of their Behaviour of themſelves *therein*.

He is the Miniſter of God, to thee] Whoſoever thou art, who art *ſubjected* to his *Government*, and therefore to all ſuch as are in a *ſtate* of ſubjection.

To thee for Good] Not for thy *Hurt*, or Damage, if thou art *ſubject* and behaveſt thy ſelf *well*. *Civil Authority*, is not deſign'd for *Deſtruction*, but for *Protection*: The *Good* of particular Perſons, and ſo of a whole *Community*; which is made up of *ſuch*: is the great *End* of Government; that they may be *protected* in their Perſons, Eſtates, Liberties and Lives. And this is the *End*, that Rulers ſhould aim at, in ſubordination to the *Glory* of God, which is the ſupream End of all *Rule*, and even of all things. The Words being thus explained, afford this *Doctrine*, Namely,

That the civil Ruler, is the Miniſter of God, for the good of particular Perſons, and the whole Community.

Of

Or thus,

That civil Rulers, who are the Miniſters of God, ſhould improve all their Power and Influence, to promote the beſt Good of a People.

For ſeeing this is the next End, God deſigns them unto, as Miniſters under him; they ought, themſelves, to aim at it, and purſue the Good and Happineſs of all under their Conduct, with utmoſt Vigour.

The *Doctrine* may be ſpoken to, under *Two Propoſitions*:

1. Prop. *Civil Rulers are the Miniſters of God.*
2. Prop. *They ſhould, as his Miniſters, improve their Power and Influence, to promote the beſt Good of a People.*

1. Prop. *Civil Rulers are God's Miniſters.*

Here, I ſhall conſider the *two Degrees* of *Rulers* together; the *ſupream* and *ſubordinate Rulers* in the *State*, and the two fold Authority reſident in them, *legiſlative* and *executive*; whereby good and wholeſome *Laws* are both *made* and *adminiſtred*, or executed. They are *all*, tho' of various Orders and Degrees, having different *Stiles* and *Powers*, and their proper *Sphere* to move and act in, *the Miniſters of God*. And this intends ſeveral things, as,

1. That they are of God's *ordaining*, or *appointing*.
2. That they have their *Qualifications* from him.
3. That he exalts them to place of *Power*; gives them their *Commiſſion* and *Inſtructions*, wherein he *bounds* and *limits* their *Power*, and *directs* it, to the proper *End*: And he *removes* them from their *places* as he ſees *meet*.

4. He gives them their *Work* to do, and the meaſure of *ſucceſs* they have in it is owing to his Bleſſing; and he will *Call* them to *account at laſt*.

1. *Civil Rulers are of God's Appointment*; that is, He has ordained or appointed that there ſhould be a *Rule* over Men ‖; and therefore that there ſhould be *Rulers* to *Exerciſe* this Authority, or Government. All *Power is of God; the Powers that be, are Ordained of God*, ſays the Apoſtle, in our Context. If the *Power* it ſelf be of God's Ordaining, ſo likewiſe are the Perſons inveſted with it. For Power to *act*, ſuppoſes a Subject *inveſted* with that Power, and that in order to the *exerting* of it. And agreably, the Apoſtle here puts the *Power* for the *Perſon* in whom it reſides, by a uſual *Metonimy* of the *Adjunct* for the Subject. And this *Inſtitution* is founded on Reaſon; and GOD has done it in infinite Wiſdom and Kindneſs to *Man*, in his preſent *ſtate*, which requires that there ſhould be a *civil ſubordination* among Men, Superiority and Power in ſome, and Inferiority and Submiſſion as to others; and without this, as things are, there could be no carrying on, in the World. There could be no ſuch thing as *civil ſociety* kept up without it. It is then, the ſovereign Will and Order of *Heaven* that there ſhould be Order and Rule in *civil Societies*; and all Rulers of what Degree ſoever, are *Ordained* of God. *Judges and Officers ſhalt thou make thee in all thy Gates. Deut.* 16. 18. And in this Reſpect, *Civil Rulers* are God's *Miniſters*.

2. *They are his Miniſters, as he qualifies them for the Work they are called unto, in what degree or meaſure ſoever it be.* There are ſeveral *Qualifications* neceſſary to fit Perſons for *Rule*, or in order to the effectual

‖ 2 Sam. 23. 3.

manage-

management *thereof*; ſuch as *Knowledge, Wiſdom or Prudence, Juſtice or Righteouſneß, Courage, Patience or Clemency, Diligence, the Fear of God*, &c.

Firſt, *Knowledge* and *Prudence*. They that are to Rule over others, have need of Acquaintance with *Books* as well as *Men*, and particularly, with the *Conſtitution, Laws*, and *Cuſtoms* of the People they are to *govern* or rule over. They ſhould be well ſeen into the fundamental Laws of the Conſtitution; by which the *Liberties* and *Priviledges* of the *Subject* are *ſecured*; as well as the *Prerogative* of the *Prince* is *aſcertained*. For if the *Rulers* of a People don't rightly underſtand the *Conſtitution*, or duly conſider whether it be an *abſolute Monarchy*, where the ſeparate *Will* of the *Prince* is the Law or Rule for the Subject; or a *mixt Monarchy*, where the *Prerogative* is bounded and limited by *Law*; and the Subjects Liberty and Property *ſecured* by *legal Fences*. If they don't duly conſider how *dearly* their Priviledges have been purchaſed, how *highly* they are eſteemed, how *valuable* they are in themſelves, and how jealous a People juſtly are of them; the Rulers may not be ſo careful to keep to the *Conſtitution*, and eſtabliſhed Laws and Rules made for the Defence of theſe Invaluable Priviledges. If they *judge* otherwiſe of thoſe things than they really are, if they undervalue or ſlight them, and think it indifferent whether they are preſerved or not, they will not be ſo able to ſerve a People.

Again, As they need this Knowledge of the *Conſtitution* or the fundamental Laws, ſo of thoſe particular *Laws*, by which they are to *judge* of Cauſes between Man and Man, in order to the doing of *Juſtice*, that ſo it may run down as a *ſtream*, watering all with its moiſture, and rendring all Induſtry and every good Deſign fruitful. Without this

Knowledge and Skill, *good Laws* can neither be *made* nor duly *executed*. "There is (ſays *One*) no ſtudy more Copious, nor any Practice more difficult than that of the Law. There is ſuch a variety of Actions, requiring a particularly Application of the general *Rules* of Juſtice to them; there are ſo many *knotty Caſes*, wherein the *Truth* doth not lie ſo ſhallow as to be eaſily come at; ſuch is the unskilfulneſs of ſome that have a good Cauſe, and ſuch the Craft and Subtilty of them that have a bad One; ſuch the Trials and Shifts that Men have deviſed to pervert the ſenſe, and evade the force of the ſtrongeſt Laws; ſuch the fair Colours, which unfair Advocates, ſtudy to put upon the moſt unjuſt and illegal Actions, that if there be not Knowledge and Wiſdom, to ſearch out the matter, there will be no judging on which ſide Truth and Juſtice lies." And therefore, thoſe who are to judge, in theſe things, need Knowledge in the Laws they are to judge by, and Wiſdom to apply theſe general Rules to particular Actions. Rulers need a *Diſcretion*, an *Aptneſs* to apply the Knowledge they have to the Nature and Circumſtances of things; to diſcern *Time* and *Judgment* †. This was the Commendation of the Heads of the Tribe of *Iſſachar*, that they had underſtanding of the *Times*, to know what *Iſrael* ought to do, in the then, preſent emergency. Things may be ſo circumſtanced with a People; the publick Affairs may be ſo *embarraſt*, that it may be no eaſy matter to know what is fitteſt to be done. Many times, the way of the publick Proceedings, lies in ſuch a *Narrow*, and there are ſuch Difficulties and Dangers on each Hand, that it requires the moſt conſummate *Prudence* and the greateſt Circumſpection, to conduct the publick Affairs right. *The Wiſdom of the Prudent*,

† Eccl. 8. 5.

is to underſtand his way. —— *Prov.* 14. 8. *Whoſo is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things, prudent and he ſhall know them.*

Again, *Juſtice* and *Righteouſneſs* is another needful Qualification. *He that ruleth over Men, muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of God.* *Magiſtrates* muſt put on Righteouſneſs as their proper *Ornament*; their Judgment muſt be as a *Robe* and *Diadem* †. Theſe muſt be the conſtant *Attire* of their Minds. They muſt have an *habitual Diſpoſition* to execute Juſtice, and muſt put on a *fixed Reſolution* to do it. Their Righteouſneſs ſhould be, as the *Girdle of their Loins* *, to keep them tight and ſteady in all their motions. Their Work is to diſtribute Juſtice; but how can they do this, if they are not themſelves *juſt?* Have not a ſteady, conſtant *Care* and *Zeal* to promote Juſtice and Righteouſneſs among Men? Without this, thoſe that are put into *place*, will but *abuſe* their Authority, and be *falſe* to their Truſt. *Flattery* and *Bribery* will come upon them as an *armed* Man; and they will have no Power to withſtand them. The Prophet *Iſaiah* complains of ſuch in his Time ¶, *How is the faithful City become an Harlot! it was full of Judgment, Righteouſneſs lodged in it; but now Murderers:* —— *The Princes are rebellious and Companions of Thieves: Every one loveth Gifts, and followeth after Rewards: They judge not the fatherleſs, neither doth the Cauſe of the Widow come unto them.* Without this Qualification in *Rulers*, their Wiſdom will degenerate into Craft and Subtilty; and ſo render them the more capable to *do* Hurt.

Further, *Courage* and *Boldneſs*, is another needful Qualification, in a *Ruler*, that he may hold the Balance of Juſtice ſteadily, and may weigh out Righteouſneſs exactly to all Perſons, without Reſpect to

† Job 29. 4. * Iſa. 11. 5. ¶ Iſa. 1. 21, 23.

any.

any. That he may *dare* to ſay and do, that which is right in all Cauſes, and may not out of Fear any more than Favour wave from the inflexible Rules of Juſtice. Therefore *Moſes* gives it in Charge to his Judges, Deut. 1. 17. *Be not afraid of the Face of Man.* "Be not *overaw'd* to do an ill thing, either by the clamour of the Crowd, or by the menaces of thoſe who have Power in their Hands." *Did I fear a great multitude,* (ſays *Job*) *or did the Contempt of Families terrify me, that I kept ſilence* *? And it becomes *all* others of this Quality, to have the ſame *undaunted* Reſolution in a *good Cauſe*; to appear *boldly* and act in Defence of Juſtice, and in the proſecution of the *publick Good*; tho' they are to contend with the mightieſt, and have a proſpect of nothing but their Anger and Unkindneſs. They muſt not *fear* the face of Man, nor be threatned out of their Duty; but ſet their Face as a *Flint.* They muſt not be deter'd by the Number or Quality, the Scorn or Inſults of the Injurious from doing Juſtice to the Injured; nor ſuffer a righteous Cauſe to be run down. And they muſt patiently go thro' *evil Report,* in doing Good, and muſt not ſlacken in their Duty, or meditate a Retaliation.

Once more; *Meekneſs and Piety, Mercy and Clemency,* are very conſiſtent with Courage in *Rulers,* and muſt *temper* Juſtice. Juſtice and Mercy muſt meet together in the *Adminiſtration* of the ſubordinate gods, as they do in *that* of the moſt high God; of the *Rulers* on Earth, as well as the ſupream *Ruler* of Heaven and Earth. It was the Character of the Kings of *Iſrael, that they were merciful Kings* †; "They were in great Reputation for Clemency, above any of their Neighbours. They were not

* Job 31. 34 † 1 King. 20. 31.

oppreſſive

oppreſſive to their Subjects, and therefore 'twas hop'd, they would not be cruel to their Enemies, when they lay at their Mercy." This was *Behadad*'s Encouragement, when he was about caſting himſelf at *Ahab*'s Feet. It's ſometimes Juſtice in Rulers, to *ſhew* Mercy. There is indeed an unbounded Lenity which makes way for the *Contempt* of Authority, when bold Tranſgreſſors are *born* with; who ſhould be made Examples to *warn* others, which muſt by no means be pleaded for or practiſed. But yet, on the other Hand, *Rulers* muſt not be over rigorous, too ſtrict and ſevere in the Exerciſe of Juſtice. Extream Right is extream Wrong. *Moſes* is an Example for civil Rulers to follow, whoſe *Conduct* was gentle, ſuited to the Infirmity of the *State*; who gave Allowance for their Tempers and Diſtempers, and bore with many things, which could not be remedied in the *State*. And he was pitiful and compaſſionate to his People. And thus it becomes the *Rulers* of a People to be. By this means, they'll recommend themſelves to their Peoples *Eſteem*, and have the greater Advantage to *do* them Good.

Again, *Diligence* is another Requiſite in a *good Ruler*. *He muſt attend to this very thing*, v. 6. of the Context. *He that Rules muſt do it with diligence*, Rom. 12. 8. This *Work* of the Lord *muſt not be done negligently*. A *Gallio-like ſpirit, not caring for thoſe things which belong to their Office* *, is very unbecoming Men in *civil* Authority. They muſt plot and contrive for the *publick Good*; muſt be vigilant to *eſpy* Dangers at the greateſt diſtance, and induſtrious to *prevent* them. And they muſt be, as careful and painful to improve the Advantages put into their Hands to promote the good of *all*.

* *Act.* 18. 17.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, *Piety and the Fear of God*, tho' it been't abſolutely neceſſary to qualify Men for Government; yet it is a very great *Ornament* to them that are in *Power*, and ſets a Luſtre upon their other Virtues; engages the preſence of God with them; and brings a *Bleſſing* upon their Adminiſtrations. Therefore it was good Advice *Jethro* gave *Moſes, to chooſe Men of this Character, to be Rulers*, Exod. 18 21. *Able Men, ſuch as fear God, Men of Truth*, &c. Where we ſee, that *Piety* is one Qualification, here mentioned, requiſite to the orderly and effectual Improvement of their *Power*; becauſe it muſt be exerciſed in the Fear of God, and directed to his Glory, as the ultimate *End* of it. And ſurely, tho' there are a great many good Men, who mayn't be fit for Rulers, yet it can't be rationally expected, that thoſe, who han't the Fear of God, ruling in their own Hearts, are qualified, as they ought to be, for the weighty *Charge* of Government.

And ſurely *this* ought to be regarded, as well as the other Qualifications, by *thoſe* who have the diſpoſing of the *civil Offices*. Now theſe Qualifications are the *Gifts* of God. He that *forms* the ſpirit of Man within him, forms his *Genius* and Temper, according to the various Employments in the *ſtate*, he calls them unto. *Every good Gift*, Natural and Acquired, *comes from the Father of Lights* †. *He giveth wiſdom to the Wiſe, and knowledge to them that know Underſtanding*, Dan. 2. 21. "Are there Men, that *excel* others in Wiſdom and Knowledge; *Philoſophers* and *Stateſmen*, who think above the common Rate; contemplative penetrating Men? It's God that gives them this Wiſdom, and that's Reaſon ſufficient why they ſhould ſerve and honour God with it." As

† *Jam.* 1. 17.

well

well as Encouragement ſufficient to *others*, who want it, to *ask it of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not.* It is God, who endues them with a ſpirit of Government. He gave ſuch a ſpirit to *Saul*, when he was anointed King, 1 *Sam.* 10. 9. It's ſaid, *He gave him another Heart*; that is, the Heart of a *Prince*, of a *Stateſman*, as well as of a *General*. From that time, his mind is taken up, with other matters, than he had been uſed to. He thinks of nothing, but making Laws and adminiſtring Juſtice, providing for the publick ſafety" and promoting the publick good; "Theſe are the things that now fill his *Head*, ſince a new *Fire* was kindled in his *Heart*." God made *David wiſe as an Angel, to diſcern good and bad*, right and wrong: and *Solomon* wiſer than his Father, and that in Anſwer to his Prayer for *Princely* Wiſdom, that he might know how to go out and come in, before that *great*, that *wiſe* and *underſtanding People*. And he gave an early *Specimen* of the Wiſdom which God gave him, in the Judgment which he paſt upon the *Child*, which made the People obſerve and ſay, the Wiſdom of God was in him *. And as this, ſo all the other Qualifications mentioned are from God. Thus they are his *Miniſters*, as he gives them their Qualifications.

3. They are his *Miniſters*, as he *calls* them in his Providence, to *rule* over others; gives them their Power, bounds and directs it, and removes them as he ſees meet.

He calls them in a mediate way, to honourable Truſt. *Promotion comes neither, from the Eaſt nor from the Weſt, but God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another*, Pſal. 75. 5, 6. It is God, who ſetteth up Rulers. He call'd *David* from the mean

* 1 King. 3. 25 —— 28.

Employment of a *Shepard, to feed Jacob his People, and Iſrael his Inheritance; whom he fed with the Integrity of his Heart and the skilfulneſs of his Hands.* So the Prophet *Daniel* tells *Belſhazzar*, Dan. 5. 18. *The moſt high God, gave Nebuchadnezzar, thy Father, a Kingdom and Majeſty, Honour, and Glory.* It is God in his Providence, that *ſets* the *Crown* on the Heads of Princes and *puts* the *Sceptre* into their Hands †. Whatever Hand, Men have in *ſettling* the *Succeſſion*, and advancing others to place of Power, it is *done* under the Influence and Direction of the *ruling Wiſdom* of God. When the Lord, by the Prophet, complains that his People, *ſet up Kings, but not by him*; Not according to his Mind and Will; *Hoſea* 8. 4. We are not to underſtand thereby, that his Providence has no Hand in it; for if he had not *permitted* it, they could not have done it.

Again, God *gives* them their Power. Indeed it's in vain (as *One* ſays) to pretend that this Power is derived *immediately* from God; but *mediately* it is, in various ways, according to the divers Conſtitutions of Kingdoms and States. God is the Fountain from whom it comes, in whatever Channels it's *convey'd* to them. And as their Power is from him, ſo it is limited by him. It is very Obſervable that God gave *Iſrael* judicial Laws as well as others; leaving as little as might be, to the Arbitrement of *civil Rulers*; and when the People of *Iſrael* would not be ſatisfied without a *King*, God ordered *Samuel*, to *write the manner of the Kingdom in a Book*, 1 Sam. 10. 25. i. e. (ſays *Diodate*) The fundamental Laws of the Kingdom, to temper Monarchy with a Liberty befitting his own People. "It has been the continual Care of prudent Law-givers under the Guidance of

† Pſal. 21. 3.

Di-

Divine Providence, to abate the height of Sovereignty, by a meet Temperament of ſome of the Inferior ſort; ſuch were the *Ephori* at *Sparta*, the Tribunes at *Rome*, and the Delegates of the People in moſt *modern* Kingdoms and States." God has *limited* the Power of civil Rulers, by his Word and Providence. As they are ſubordinate to him, ſo limited by him. They are not to govern by *Will* and *Pleaſure*, but by *fixed Rules*, even the Rules of God's Word, and humane Laws agreeable thereto. God has not ſubjected, the Lives, Liberties, or Properties of a People to the Pleaſure of their *Superiors*: Nor may *they* invade or diſturb their *free* Enjoyment of them. *Civil Rulers*, can't do what they will, either *de Jure* or *de Facto*. There is *none* but God himſelf that has an uncontroulable unlimited Power. *He does his Pleaſure in Heaven above, and in the Earth beneath.* For *HE* being the Almighty Maker and Upholder of *all things*, he has a Right to a ſovereign Dominion over them all; and being *infinitely wiſe*, *juſt* and *good*, he is fit to govern all things, according to his Pleaſure: But no other Being is ſo. If the *beſt* of meer Men had power to do with others, as they pleas'd, they would ſoon do amiſs. The Providence of God is therefore to be *Ador'd*, in modelling the various Conſtitutions of Government, and ſettling the ſeveral *Boundaries* of *Power*, and in keeping up the *Ballance* of Power in particular States, as well as amongſt the Nations in general. "It is (ſays the Excellent Biſhop *Burnet* ||) the peculiar Happineſs of a well conſtituted Government, that there are ſettled Boundaries and eſtabliſhed Checks, to reſtrain and overawe thoſe on whom Corruption or Frailty might otherwiſe prevail too much. It is ſcarce poſſible (continues he) for humane Nature to

|| His Sermon before the Queen.

keep within Bounds, where the Power is without Controle. Some Princes may perhaps, have Virtue ſo radicated in them that how abſolute ſoever, their Authority may be, they will employ it all for the *good* of the Community. Yet this cannot laſt long, if it has no other bottom but the Will and Pleaſure of the Prince.

From *Nerva*'s Time down to *Marcus Aurelius*, the *Roman* Empire had the beſt Succeſſion of Princes, that we find in Hiſtory. Yet all the *good* that they did was ſoon over-turned by *Commodus*, in whom Arbitrary Power appeared in it's natural Colours; Luxury and Cruelty.

Happy we, (ſays he) and yet more happy, if we had a juſt ſenſe of it! who live under a Government well balanced, and ſteadily managed; where Juſtice and Mercy meet together, and temper one another; where the pooreſt are not afraid to complain, and the greateſt are not above the reach of Juſtice; where the Courſe of Law is free, and the proper places of Redreſs, are well known." And as the *Rulers* Power is thus limited, ſo it is directed by God, to the end it is to be improv'd for, which is the *good* of the People. And as he raiſeth them up to that height of Grandure, they reach unto; ſo when he pleaſes, he puts them down from their high Seats. He has a Hand in the Change of the *civil Miniſtry*. *He pulleth down one, and ſetteth up another.* We ſee ſtrange Revolutions in States and Kingdoms, (ſays Mr. *Henry*) and are ſurprized at the ſudden *Diſgrace* of ſome, and *Elevation* of others; we are full of ſuch Changes when they happen, and are ready to attribute them to ſecond Cauſes, without eyeing God's Providence therein: who has all things in his Power, *and turns the Hearts of Princes*, and People too, *as the Rivers of Water. It is God who changeth the Times and Seaſons, who removeth Kings*

and

and ſubordinate Rulers, as well as ſetteth them up, Dan. 2. 21. "Is there a Revolution in the Government? Are thoſe that were in ſupream or ſubordinate place removed or depoſed? Do they abdicate? Are they laid aſide? It is God that has ordered it." In this Reſpect, his ſovereign Dominion appears. *He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.* Thoſe that are Kings and Lords over other Men, are his Subjects; and he has an abſolute uncontrolable Power over them: He exerciſes a *ſovereign* Dominion, over thoſe who are themſelves *ſovereign Princes,* and he does his pleaſure with them; he ſets them up or ſpurns them down at pleaſure. They are liable to *civil Death,* as well as a *natural.* They are ſometimes removed from their high ſtations, as a juſt Puniſhment of there *Miſ-rule* or Mal-adminiſtration, by which they put the Foundations of the Earth out of Courſe. [memento mori] But whatever the *Reaſon of State* may be, the Providence of God is to be *obſerved* and *adored* therein.

4. They are his *Miniſters,* as they are employed about his *Work*; and their *Succeſs* therein is owing to his *Bleſſing,* and they are *accountable* to him. God makes *Civil Rulers* his Agents; they act for him, in his Name and Stead. As *earthly Monarchs* have *their* Miniſters of State, to *repreſent* their Perſons, and *act* by their Authority, becauſe they can't themſelves be every where preſent, to judge *every* Cauſe, rectify every thing amiſs, ſupply every thing that is wanting, and remove every thing that is evil. The general Reaſon given to *Moſes* by *Jethro,* for appointing *Judges* under him, to whom lay the *laſt appeal,* in *Exod.* 18. 22, 23. So God has *Miniſters* under Him, *Angels* in Heaven, and *Men* on Earth; the greateſt of them, *Kings* as well as *inferiour Rulers,* who are their Miniſters, are all of them the Miniſters of God's

God's Providence, in governing States and Kingdoms, and in keeping up Order in them. Not that he needs any of them, who can himſelf alone *rule* and *govern* the whole World, without the intervention of ſecond Cauſes, and that with infinite Eaſe to Himſelf. But ſo it hath pleaſed the Almighty Sovereign of the World; and it is in *wiſe* Condeſcention to *us*, who could not *bear* his immediate Approaches, to *ſet* over us thoſe that are of the ſame Make, and ſubject to like *Paſſions* with us, whoſe Terror will not make us afraid, and who will naturally *care* for the Good and Happineſs of thoſe of their own Nature; who while they are taking a proper Care of thoſe under their Charge, are about God's Work. They are his Vicegerents, their *Thrones* and *Scepters* are his; *The Shields of the Earth belong to God.* They rule for him, and with him, as well as by him. *By me Kings reign*, ſays God. *Prov.* 8. 15. *By me*, ſome read it *for me*, which teaches Kings, and Governours as ſent by them, and all inferiour Rulers, to improve their Power and Authority for God's Glory, and to ſupport his Intereſt, They are ſaid to *rule with God. Hoſea* 11. 12. *But Judah* (to whom the Scepter belonged) *yet ruleth with God.* The Princes and Governours thereof improved the Power they received from God for his Glory, and the Good of the *Society.* When Rulers judge the People, they judge *for the Lord*; and *the Judgment* they paſs if *right*, is *the Lord's*, 2 *Chron.* 19 6. *Deut.* 1. 17. They ſerve the *Lord*, while they are thus ſerving their *Generation*, and they muſt do both *by the will of God*, as *David* did, *that Man after God's own Heart*, And their Succeſs in this Work is owing to the divine Bleſſing. It is God that gives them *Counſel and Might*: who guides their Steps for them. If he deſerts them, they are liable to fall into the groſſeſt Errors, and to commit the greateſt *Soleciſms* in Government,

vernment. The wiſeſt of Men, are not wiſe at all Times. They that have the greateſt Foreſight may be overſeen. The beſt State-Phyſicians may miſs it in their *Preſcriptions*, and make application of improper Remedies, that may increaſe rather than abate the *Maladies* of the *Body Politick*. Let not wiſe Men glory in their *Wiſdom*, leſt it ſhould depart from them. Nor let others place them in God's Stead, who works by them, and attribute the Praiſe to Man, which is due to God, for their Gifts and Uſefulneſs: Who are *no more* to a People, than he makes them to be. 'Tis God that makes them Bleſſings, when they are *ſuch*. 'Tis his Grace that enables them to anſwer their End. And whether they do or no, they are accountable to him for their Managements, their Doings therein. Even thoſe (if there be any ſuch) who are not accountable to Men on Earth, yet muſt give Account of themſelves to the God of Heaven, the *Judge* of Quick and Dead. It is his Prerogative alone, who is King of Kings, to be *Unaccountable* as well as *Uncontrolable*. *He giveth no account of his Matters*; but he will require an account of all that hold under *Him*, and have received Talents *from* Him, to be improved *for* Him. And they that are raiſed above the Reach of humane Juſtice, can't by any means get above the Reach of the Divine Juſtice. Rulers as well as others are accountable to God, particularly, for the Power and Honour they are inveſted and adorned with, the Improvement they have made thereof, the Good or Hurt they have done therewith. And according as they will be found to have improved their Talents, either in doing or not doing Good with them, ſo will their Sentence be. And let this ſuffice, in ſpeaking to the firſt Propoſition, which is, That civil Rulers are the Miniſters of God.

2. Pro-

2. Propoſition, *That civil Rulers, who are the Miniſters of God, ſhould improve all their Power and Influence to promote the beſt Good of their People.* Thereby only can they anſwer the End of their Inſtitution, and the Relation they ſtand in to God, as his *Miniſters.* Now, here I ſhall ſhow,

1. How they ſhould promote the beſt Good of a People.
2. The Obligation they are under to do it.

1. *I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, how the Rulers of a People may promote their beſt Good*: And this they may do,

1. *By ſecuring to them their Liberties and Privileges, civil and ſacred.* Theſe very nearly *affect* a People's Welfare, and they muſt be blinded with *Prejudice* to a great Degree, who can't ſee it, and won't acknowledge it. On the Preſervation of *theſe*, Religion and Property does greatly depend; the flouriſhing of Learning and Arts, Trade and Induſtry. And our *Rulers* may do much towards the preſervation of theſe, and they ought to improve their Influence for this End: And indeed they are ſo valuable, that no Coſt ſhould be ſpared for their Preſervation: And by thus becoming *Guardians* to their Liberties, they become *Patriots* to their Country.

2. *By making good and wholſome Laws.* Good Laws are the *Bands* of Civil Societies; the Joynts and Sinews of the Body Politick, which *keeps* every Member in its proper Place, and every one about their proper Buſineſs, which tends ſo much to the Quiet of the whole. Without *theſe*, Mankind would ſoon become like the Fiſhes in the Sea, or the Beaſts of the Foreſt, where the greater devour the leſſer. The weakeſt

weakeſt muſt ſuffer and not the worſt. And in ſhort, *humane ſociety*, would ſoon disband, without ſome certain *Rules*, to govern Men's outward Actions by, and to keep them in due Bounds. The making of theſe is one Branch of the Power committed to Rulers, and the making good Laws will be one principal Inſtance of their publick Care for their People. But humane Laws, muſt not be croſs to the ſuperior and antecedent Obligations, we lie under to the Laws of Nature and the Laws of God: They ſhould be ſuch as ſhould ſubſerve to the Honour and flouriſhing of the Common-wealth, ſuch as countenance *Worth* and *Merit*, ſuch as tend to promote *Virtue* and make it reputable, and ſuppreſs Sin, and make it abhor'd and fear'd. They ſhould alſo *put* the Laws in Execution, without which the beſt Laws will not anſwer the End. This is to the Body *politick*, as the circulation of the Blood is to the *natural* Body, which keeps it in a Healthy, Athletick plight. The want of this, is very hurtful to the *publick*. Some ſay, that the Violation of the Laws, is not ſo prejudicial to the common-wealth as the not duly executing them: For without this the grandure of Government can't be kept up, nor the *lawleſs*, for whom the Laws were made, kept in awe. If Authority be trampled upon, and the edge of the Laws rebated, iniquity will ſoon grow rampant. The Sons of *Belial*, *will lift up the Horn on high, and ſpeak with a ſtiff Neck.* The Sword of Juſtice muſt be drawn therefore, and they that bear it muſt not bear it in vain; but *be a Terror to Evil-doers, and a Praiſe to them that do well.*

3. *By their religious, good and virtuous Example.* The Example of Men of *Figure* has a great Influence upon the manners of a People. If the *Rulers* are Men of Religion and Virtue, if they are zealous for the beſt things, this tends to make others like 'em: if

 their

their Lives *ſhine* with Piety, Juſtice, and Sobriety before others, they will be invited to glorify God by an Imitation of them. But if they are irreligious and licentious, this tends to corrupt and debauch them. *If a Ruler hearken to Lies, all his Servants are wicked, Prov.* 29. 12. *When vile Men are exalted, the Wicked walk on every ſide, Pſal.* 12. 8.

4. *By encouraging Virtue and ſuppreſſing Vice*: The promoting Religion and Reformation among a People. *Righteouſneſs exalteth a NATION; but Sin is a REPROACH to any People. Prov.* 14. 34. The general Practice and Profeſſion of Virtue *exalteth* a Nation, as it *elevates* the People's *Minds*, and qualifies them for the Favour of God. And ordinarily it *fares* with a People in outward Reſpects, as it fares with *Religion* among them. They are *favoured* with Proſperity, or exerciſed with Adverſity, very much according as Religion *flouriſhes* or *declines* among them. While they are careful to uphold Religion in it's purity and power, they have the promiſe of outward *Proſperity. If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the Land*, Iſa. 1. 19. But when Religion is on the declining Hand, when Iniquity abounds, they are *threatned* with God's Judgments. *But if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be ſlain with the Sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.* v. 20. And agreably, God's Diſpenſations have been *ſuited* to the moral ſtate of a People, who rewards or puniſhes *civil ſocieties* as *ſuch*, in this Life *only*. An obedient People will ſurely be made a happy People. And civil Rulers may *help* forward this their Happineſs, by encouraging and promoting Religion and Righteouſneſs among them, which *tends* to exalt them; and by ſuppreſſing Sin and Prophaneſs, which is to their Reproach; eſpecially, if a religious and profeſſing People, Religion is not more *beneficial* than Sin is *hurtful*

hurtful to a People; for as *that* procures the Bleſſings of God, ſo *this* pulls down his Judgments upon them. And the *Rulers* of a People can no way better promote their beſt *good*, than by promoting Virtue and ſuppreſſing Vice. The work of Reformation, on which their Happineſs does ſo greatly depend, muſt ordinarily begin with the *Rulers*. They muſt lead in it, by their Example. It lies with them alſo to enquire out, what is amiſs in others, and to ſharpen the *edge* of the Laws againſt enormous Crimes; proportioning the penalty to the Nature of the Offence. They may do a great deal to *curb in* and reſtrain bold Tranſgreſſions, by putting the Laws in Execution. They may, by their Authority and Influence, do much to ſet forward Reformation, and ſo to promote the *beſt good* of a People.

5. *By encouraging the Miniſters of the Goſpel, in their Work.* The *Miniſters* of Religion are ſome of the greateſt Bleſſings a People enjoy. They are therefore call'd the *Light* of the World, and the *Salt* of the Earth, to denote the great and extenſive Uſefulneſs and Benefit of a good Miniſtry. *Sole et ſale Nihil utilius.* By their Lives and Doctrine, they communicate the *Light* of ſaving Knowledge, and help to *ſeaſon* others with Grace. Their great Work is to *Convert* Sinners, and to *build* up true Converts in Faith, Holineſs and Comfort. They are *workers* together with God, in carrying on his Goſpel Deſign in the World: in pulling down and deſtroying the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and in building up the Kingdom of Chriſt. This is an honourable Work, and that which tends to the eternal Welfare of Men's Souls. *He that turns a ſinner from the Error of his ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and hide the multitude of ſins.* Their Work makes the Magiſtrates Work the eaſier, by promoting *Peace* and *Order* as well

well as *Piety*. "One good Miniſter (ſays Dr. *Prideaux* *) by his Weekly Preaching and Daily good Example, *ſets* forward the good Order of the Kingdom, more than any two of the beſt Juſtices can, by their exacteſt diligence in the Execution of the Laws which they are entruſted with. For theſe, by the utmoſt of their Coercions, can go no further than to reſtrain the outward Acts of Wickedneſs; but the other reforms the Heart within, and removes all thoſe evil Inclinations of it, from whence they flow." By their *Prayers*, they procure the *Bleſſing* of God upon their People, Ezek. 44. 30. *That he may cauſe the Bleſſing to reſt in thine Houſe*, i. e. by praying for the Bleſſing which God commandeth upon his People. They are Interceſſors with God for them: They ſtand in the Gap, to turn away God's Wrath. The *Prieſts*, the *Miniſters* of the Lord, were directed in Order hereunto, *to weep between the Porch and the Altar, and to ſay, Spare thy People, O Lord.* *Joel.* 2 17. They are the Perſons pitch't upon to ſtand in the Breach, and make up the Hedge. They are *highly to be eſteem'd for their Work ſake*: and they ſhould be encouraged therein, that they may become yet greater Bleſſings. *All God's People* ſhould endeavour to ſtrengthen their *Hands* and encourage their *Hearts*. But eſpecially the *Rulers* of a People, ſhould *do ſo*; they ſhould not only exhort them to fulfil their Miniſtry —— *Say to Archippus, take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it* †, but encourage 'em to do it. They are liable to be dampt, and diſcouraged in their Work; and they need the Countenance of Authority; they need protection from the Inſults of the Wicked, from the Virulency of their *Tongues*, and the Violence of their *Hands*. Their *Rulers* ſhould

* Con. Hiſt. Part 1. pag. 391. † Col. 4. 17.

ſpeak

ſpeak reſpectfully of them, whoſe Deportment or Carriage to their *Miniſters* will be much minded, and others will *govern* themſelves, very much in this point, by their *Example*. They ſhould ſpeak kindly, ſpeak *comfortably* to them, as *Hezekiah* did to the *Levites*, that *taught the good Knowledge of the Lord*, 2 Chron. 30. 32. Yea, they ſhould encourage them by their readineſs to contribute towards their maintainance, and by uſing their power to cauſe others to do it. *Rich Men*, and Men in *Authority eſpecially*, who are often rich, may do *great* ſervice to Religion, by their *Generoſity* to their *Miniſters*. This was one way in which *Hezekiah* encouraged the *Levites*: He gave liberally towards their ſupport, and the *Princes* followed his good Example; and this encouraged them to prepare themſelves for the Service of God's Sanctuary. *A great Number of them, ſanctified themſelves*. God expects this from rich Men, to whom he has given Abundance, that they *do* proportionably *caſt* into his Treaſury. And tho' it ſeems, for the preſent, to be like Bread caſt upon the Waters; yet will return again, in the like or better Bleſſings, even *ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Things in Chriſt*. But how generous and kind ſoever our *pious Rulers* are to their own *Miniſters*, yet their *kind Regards* or *Concern* at leaſt, muſt not reſt *there*; but extend to all the Miniſters of Chriſt every where, within the reach of their Influence. The Miniſters of Religion, fall under their Care, as well as Religion it ſelf. And one way, in which they are to promote Religion, is by encouraging the Miniſters of it, and that particularly by taking Care of their comfortable Support. Our *honouable Legiſlature*, have it in their power, to oblige the People to do that which is handſome and honourable, to their *Miniſters*; and to make reaſonable Allowance, for the *Diſcount* upon the Paper Currency, whereby their ſmall *Annuities*,

are

are much diminiſhed. Indeed ſome places have been ſo juſt, as do it, (and I would take this Occaſion to mention the Juſtice and Kindneſs of my own People on this Account) but where the People don't do their *Miniſters* Juſtice, in this Reſpect, the *Legiſlature* can. And the poverty of the Land is no ſufficient Excuſe for not doing it; for this Neglect, whether it be found in the *Rulers* or *People*, will tend to make us yet poorer: Their Generoſity in this point which looks like ſcattering, tendeth to increaſe; and the withholding their juſt due, which is withholding more than is meet, tendeth to impoveriſh them. *Prov.* 11. 24. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to Poverty.* This *Penuriouſneſs* is mentioned, by the Prophet, as the Reaſon, in part, of God's withholding his Bleſſings from that People, and their Reformation in this point was the way to obtain them. *Mal.* 3. 8——12. It will then, be not only for the particular Comfort of God's Miniſters, that they ſhould have their *preſent Grievances* redreſt, but for the *publick good*. There have been great Complaints, and if they are well grounded, they reach far, and enter not only into the Ears of our *Rulers*, but of the *Lord of Hoſts himſelf*. And if he is diſpleaſed at the withholding the Wages of thoſe that reap down our Corn-Field †; much more will he be ſo, at the withholding their Dues, whom he employs in gathering *in* his Harveſt, in the Field of the Goſpel; even a Harveſt of Souls. O that the People of God would hearken to their *Rulers*, that God may hearken unto *them*. And let the Trial, the Experiment be made, which God propoſes to his People; *Prove me now herewith*, (ſays *God* by the Prophet) *if I will not open to you the Win-*

† Jam. 5. 4.

dows

Flows of Heaven, and pour you out a Bleſſing, that there ſhall not be Room enough to receive it.

6. *By taking care of the Education of Youth among their People, and by making ſuitable Proviſion for the Support of it.* The Education of *Youth* is a great Benefit and Service to the *Publick*. This is that which civilizes them, takes down their Temper, tames the Fierceneſs of their Natures, forms their minds to vertue learns 'em to carry it with a juſt Deference to *Superiours*; makes them tractable or manageable; and by learning and knowing what it is to be *under Government*, they will know the better how to *govern others*, when it comes to their Turn. And thus it tends to good Order in the State. Yea good Education tends to promote Religion and Reformation as well as Peace and Order; as it *gives* check to Idleneſs and Ignorance, and the evil Conſequences thereof. Further, by this means Men are fitted for Service, for publick Stations in *Church* and *State*, and to be publick Bleſſings. The publick would greatly ſuffer by the neglect thereof, and Religion could not ſubſiſt long, but would decay, and even die without it. The publick Weal depends upon it, and therefore it ought to be the publick care, the care of the *Rulers*; and ſo it has been, in the beſt formed Common-wealths, who have erected and endowed publick Schools and Colledges, for the Education of Youth. This was our Fathers early care, even in the Infancy of the Country; and they have been remarkably own'd in their pious Zeal for the Glory of God, and the good of their Poſterity: which by this means, they have been providing for. Learning has flouriſhed greatly under the care of the Government. New *Colledges* have been *erected*, and God has raiſed up *generous Friends* to become *Benefactors* to them; and it lies with

with our *Rulers* to ſee that the Ends of ſuch Endowments and Benefactions may be anſwered; and that the Laws about inferiour Schools be not eluded by thoſe who are no Friends to Learning; and that thoſe who preſide in them, and in the ſuperiour School too, the School of the Prophets, may be duly ſupported. And by this means Learning will be encouraged and the publick Good promoted: So it may,

7. And laſtly, *By the furtherance of Union and Peace amongſt a People.* Theſe are the very *Soul* of good Order, the *Life* and *Strength* of *civil Society*. *Jeruſalem*'s Strength and Glory was, that it was a City compact together, and at Unity in *her ſelf*. A People united and at Peace among themſelves, *is like a threefold Cord, which is not eaſily broken.* Eccl. 4. 12. But Strife and Diviſion untwiſts and weakens them, and renders them more liable to be broken in pieces. *Divide et impera*, was an old Policy. It was obſerved of the old *Britains*, when the *Romans* invaded them, *Dum ſinguli pugnant, univerſi vincuntur. A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, cannot ſtand.* The *Pſalmiſt*, when he pray'd for the deſtruction of his Enemies, pray'd for their Diſſenſion, as a means to it. *Deſtroy, O Lord, and divide their Tongues. Pſal.* 55. 9. "It is not the outward Force and Violence that is uſed againſt a Common-wealth, that hurts it ſo much as a Spirit of Diviſion and Contention, ariſing from Jealouſies, Prejudices and Animoſities among themſelves." Whoever then can cloſe theſe *Breaches*, and reſtore Peace among a People, will do good Service to the Publick: They'll do the part of State-Phyſitians, and pour in Wine and Oyl into the Wounds of the Body-Politick. Now the *Rulers* of a People may do much towards it, by their Union amongſt themſelves, and their Condeſcention one to another, in order

order thereunto. If the Heads of a People unite among themſelves, that will tend to Unity among all in General; but if they divide, the People will do ſo too. And when Differences begin, no Body can tell where they will end. For *the beginning of Strife is as the letting forth of Waters*, whoſe Courſe is rapid and irreſiſtible: therefore it is good Advice, *to leave off Contention before it be meddled with.* But when it is actually begun, and there are miſunderſtandings among *Rulers* or *People*, or *Both*, they ſhould be remov'd and heal'd as ſoon as poſſible. And a little Condeſcention will do much towards it; Yea, tho' the Breach made be wide like the Sea. *A ſoft Anſwer turneth away Wrath, and yielding pacifieth great Offences.* Thus we have ſhewn, how the Civil Rulers are to promote the publick Good. We may proceed in the next place to ſhew,

2. *The Obligation they are under to do it.* And this they are obliged unto in point of Duty, of Honour, of Gratitude, Juſtice and Intereſt.

1. *In Point of Duty:* For in that God has appointed them to be his Miniſters, for his People's Good, it is their Duty to promote this *End*. *Civil Rulers* are advanced to this Honour and Dignity, and veſted with Power over others, not for their *own ſakes*, their own Advantage, *meerly*; but for the *People's*. 2 *Sam.* 5. 12. *And David perceived that the Lord had eſtabliſhed him King over Iſrael, and that he had exalted his Kingdom for his People Iſrael's ſake.* *David* acknowledges that he was not advanced or raiſed to the Top of Empire to make himſelf great, rich and abſolute; but that being in Superiour Circumſtances, he might be capable to do the more Good, and be the greater Bleſſing. And the ſame muſt all others *in Power* acknowledge; even that the Authority they are veſted

with was put into their Hands, for the ſake of their People; for their Advantage; for the Good of all in General; that under their Protection, they might enjoy their juſt Rights, and innocent Pleaſures, without Diſturbance: *that they might lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* And if this be the End, of their Exaltation, it is their Duty, no doubt, to aim at the publick Good in all their publick Actions; and to prefer that before their own private Advantage, *the Peace of Jeruſalem above their chief Joy.* But if they ſlight the publick Intereſt, or Sacrifice it to their private Advantage or Reſentment, they Neglect their Duty and can't anſwer it to God their Supream. If they improve their Power to oppreſs a People; *lay heavy Burthens upon them, grievous to be born,* they betray their Truſt, invert the true Ends of Government, and inſtead of Bleſſings become the greateſt Puniſhments to a People.

2. *They are obliged in point of Honour. The Honour of God, their own Honour, and the Honour of Government.*

The Honour of God:—— Whatever God has made *their* Duty, he has deſign'd it for his *own* Honour alſo. Now it is their Duty to do Good in their places; and in doing of it, they ſhew forth the praiſes of him who has called them to this Work. Hereby they that are his Vice-gerents and ſtand in *his* place, act with a becoming Subordination to him, and make an agreeable Repreſentation of him. If they imitate the *Pattern* the great Ruler of the World has ſet them, in a diffuſive Goodneſs, as well as unblemiſh'd Integrity, they do greatly honour him. If the Laws are duly executed by them, Juſtice is adminiſtred, Property ſecured, Injuries and Wrongs are redreſſed, Offenders puniſhed, good Order and Peace is preſerved, Religion and Virtue duly countenanced and encouraged, and the general

Weal

Weal promoted; God's Name is hereby glorified, as well as the People benefited. They ſhould then do their Duty in theſe Reſpects, becauſe it's for the Glory of God; and the Contrary will be diſhonourable to him.

Again, *They are obliged, for their own Honour, to do Good.* The doing Good in their places, the ſerving their Generation faithfully, will be a Credit to themſelves. Hereby they will juſtly merit the Stile of *Benefactors* and *Gods* to their People. Without this, their honourable Titles will be but a Diſgrace to them; Whereas, if they become Bleſſings in their places, God and Man will put *Honour* upon them. God will honour thoſe that thus honour him. And the People are ready to be laviſh of their Reſpects, their Praiſes on ſuch. *Men will praiſe others, when they do well for themſelves, Pſal.* 49. 18. Much more if they do well for the Publick, for all in general. There are few, that can withhold a Tribute of Thanks at leaſt, from them that are good Servants to the Publick. They are apt either to rob the great Efficient to pay Inſtruments, who are but his Miniſters; and give undue Honours to the *Heroes* of the *World*, who are as the *Guardians* of the *State.* Now this is propoſed by God himſelf to Perſons of publick Truſt, as a motive to Virtuous and Heroick Actions. *For thoſe that honour me, I will honour,* 1 Sam. 2. 30. And the *Apoſtle* exhorts Chriſtians to labour after a good Name and Reputation, *Phil.* 4. 8. *Whatſoever things are true,* &c. *if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe things.* This Scripture may be applied in this Caſe. *Magiſtrates* ſhould *ſo* act in their places, even with that Wiſdom and Unblameableneſs, that others may praiſe them; they ſhould not give occaſion to them to *blaſpheme* or *reproach* the ſubordinate Gods, for that will reflect on the ſupream God.

This will be for the Honour of Government it ſelf, alſo. *Civil Rulers* ſhould conſult and maintain the Honour of Government. Now the more they act up to the true Ends of Government, the more Honour will, by this means, be reflected upon it. The more valuable will it appear to be, the more will it be prized, the more will the Authority of it be ſtrengthened, and the Laws enforced. They ſhould then labour *for* the Honour of God, their own Honour, and the Honour of Government, to be Bleſſings in their places.

3. *They are obliged in point of Gratitude to God, and Juſtice to Man.*

In Gratitude to God; who puts this Honour upon them, in making them *Miniſters* under himſelf, for the good of others; and in giving them ſuch *great* Advantages to be uſeful and ſerviceable in the World, *above* and *beyond* what others enjoy. And this is that which makes *Titles* of *Honour* and *civil Offices* ſo deſirable, as they give good Men Opportunity and Advantage to *ſerve* God and his People here, and thereby to add to their Crown of Glory in another World; where all their faithful Services will be rewarded abundantly. God himſelf will think upon them for Good, tho' Men do not. He will reward every good and great Man, according to all the Good he does for his People. Now *civil Rulers*, who have this Honour put upon them in this World, and a *Price* put into their Hands to do good, and to lay up Treaſure in Heaven, a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, they are obliged in Gratitude to God, to lay out themſelves in his Service, and in doing Good.

Again, *They are obliged, in Juſtice to their People*, who help to ſupport their Dignity, and maintain their

their Grandure, by paying Tribute to them, as it's the People's Duty to do. —— 'Tis indeed the Duty of a People to ſupport Government. It's our Saviour's Rule, his Command, to *give to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, as well as to God, the things which are God's*, Mark 12. 17. And agreeably it was his own practice. He wrought a Miracle that he might comply with the Duty of paying Tribute, *Mat.* 17. 27. The Apoſtle lays it down as a Duty, agreeable to our Saviour's Rule, 7 *v.* of our Context, *Render therefore to all their Dues: Tribute to whom Tribute, Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom*, &c. *Civil Rulers*, who devote themſelves to the publick Service, ſhould be honourably ſupported or rewarded. They that ſerve the Publick, ſhould live of the Publick, as they that *preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel: for who goeth a Warfare at his own Charge?* 1 Cor. 9. 7, 14. Now, when a *People* do their Duty to their *Rulers*, that is a further Obligation upon them to do their Duty to their People. When a People honourably ſupport them that are in Authority over them, they may juſtly claim the Benefit of their *Government*. *For this Cauſe pay you Tribute alſo, that they may attend continually upon this very thing*, v. 6. *Context*, That they may devote their Time and Tho'ts to ſerve the Publick. As therefore their Attendance on the publick Buſineſs, which takes up ſo much of their Time, does juſtly merit an honourable Support; *the Labourer being worthy of his reward*: ſo their receiving it, in conſideration of their ſerving a People, does oblige 'em to do it. What is thus beſtowed, is to be refunded, repaid in all the Bleſſings of Government.

4. And finally. *They are obliged in point of Intereſt and Advantage, both Temporal and Eternal.*

It will be for their own Intereſt as well as the People's, if they anſwer the End of their Inſtitution. If they improve

improve their *great* Advantages of Power and Influence *to do good*, it will be not only, for their Honour but their Profit, their temporal or civil Advantage. They will receive the Benefit of their own good Government, in *common* with others. If the publick Good is promoted, and a People flouriſh under *their* Adminiſtration, *they* will partake of the general proſperity. As when the Publick ſuffers, their private Intereſt will ſuffer with it; ſo if it proſpers it will be to *their* Advantage, as well as of *others*. If the Ship of the Common-wealth ſinks, there will be no ſuch thing, whatever ſome may vainly imagine, as preſerving private Cabins. Therefore Perſons in *publick Stations* do beſt conſult their *own* private Intereſt, in ſeeking the publick Good, and promoting of it. Theſe can never be ſeparated with Advantage. Thoſe then that are at the Helm, are obliged, for their own Intereſt, to ſteer the publick Affairs right, that no Damage may enſue; for if it does, they will be fellow-ſufferers with others in the publick loſſes, as they will be ſharers with them in the publick Gains. But if any ſhould make up their *private* Fortunes out of the Ruines of the *publick*, they will looſe more another way. Such Gains will be a Moth to their other Eſtate, if they have any; and a Worm at the Root of all their Comfort, which will cauſe it to wither, as ſoon almoſt as it ſprings up. Such are liable to the Curſe denounced againſt thoſe that juſtify the Wicked, *Prov.* 24. 24. *The People ſhall curſe them, and the Nations abhor them.* Their Names will rot, while others will be had in everlaſting Remembrance; and without Repentance and Reſtitution they will be miſerable for ever, while the good and faithful Servants of the Publick, if they are alſo good Men, will be bleſſed and happy for ever. And this brings us to the other Branch of this particular mentioned.

They

They are obliged to do Good in their Places for Promoti-
own future and eternal Happineſs and Comfort. For their on
publick Actions as well as *private*, will have an In-
fluence into their *future Eſtate.* And thoſe who (as
it's ſaid of *Judah*) *rule with God, and are faithful to the
Intereſt of his People*, they may look back and reflect
with Comfort upon their publick Actions. They
that with *Nehemiah* have ſought the *publick Weal*, if
they have gone the length in Self-denial *he did*; yet
have had a compaſſionate Conſideration of the low
Circuſtances of their People; have been tender of
the Poor; have been moderate in their Deſires of
Gain; have neither oppreſſed or ſqueez'd their Peo-
ple themſelves, nor ſuffer'd others to do it; But have
broke every Yoke, burſt every Band; have delivered
the Needy and him that hath none to help him.
They that have been thus wiſe, juſt, conſiderate and
compaſſionate, will have the Comfort of it, when
they come to die, and will be able to give up their
Account with Joy; and may hope to receive that
Sentence from the Mouth of their great and glorious
Lord, *Mat.* 25. 21. *Well done thou good and faithful
Servant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will
make thee Ruler over many things; enter thou into the
Joy of thy Lord.* But as for thoſe whoſe Conduct is
the reverſe to this, as they will not be able to give
up a good Account of themſelves at the laſt, ſo they
can't expect any other Sentence than that in the fol-
lowing Verſe, 29, 30. which will be pronounced on
the wicked and ſlothful Servant. So then it's for
their own Intereſt to promote the *publick Good.* And
thus we have ſhewn *why* as well as *how* the *Civil Ru-
lers* ſhould promote the Good of their People. And
having thus ſpoken to the *Propoſitions* under the *Doc-
trine*—— we may now proceed to make ſome Im-
provement of what has been ſpoken, in ſeveral par-
ticular Uſes.

1. Uſe.

1. Uſe. Hence we may learn, *What it is Perſons ſhould aim at, in deſiring or ſeeking Promotion in the State, or accepting of Poſts of Honour, and that is, that they may be in a Capacity of doing Good, of ſerving their Generation.* They muſt not aim at Promotion *meerly* for *ſecular Advantage*, or becauſe of the *Profit* of thoſe honourable Stations; nor *meerly* that they may be advanced above their Neighbours; but that they may be Bleſſings to them. And therefore *they* ſhould look at their *own* Capacity, their Qualifications and Ability for *ſuch* Places, before they thruſt themſelves into them. They muſt examine whether they are Equal to the Truſt they are Ambitious of, whe- they are like to fill their Place, grace their Seat, and maintain the Honour of Government? If not, it will be more for their *own* Honour, as well as the *Good* of others, that they content themſelves in a private Condition, till they are qualified to ſerve their *King* and *Country* in a publick Station.

2 Uſe. Hence we may learn alſo, *What it is that ſhould recommend Perſons to Places of Truſt, and that is, a Capacity to be Serviceable, and Fidelity to the Publick.* This is that which thoſe ſhould have their Eye upon, in whoſe Power it is to fill up the *Civil Offices*, or to chooſe Perſons into the Government. *Moſes* had Reſpect hereto, in appointing *his Judges*, and *Jehoſhaphat* likewiſe: And ſo will *thoſe*, who aim at the *publick Good*. No Intereſt will *bribe* their Judgments, or prevail with them to promote thoſe to ſuch *Places* who are not fit for them. For this would be a Diſparagement to their *Conduct*, and give *Umbrage* to others, to think they acted from a Party Spirit, or that there was ſome Bribery in the Caſe. There ſhould be no Back-ſtairs, for any to climb by, to high Places without Deſert; Nor ſhould private Piques

Piques and Diſguſts keep back any from Promotion, who are of a publick Spirit, and otherwiſe well qualified to ſerve a People. I have met with a Saying of Mr. *Addiſon*'s to this purpoſe, if I remember right, "That Perſons of Worth and Capacity ſhould not be laid aſide or ſlighted, meerly becauſe they are of this or that Party". I ſuppoſe for this Reaſon, becauſe the Publick may ſuffer by this Means.

Thoſe *Honourable* and *Worthy Perſons*, then, who who are concerned in the Buſineſs of this Day, who are to improve the great Priviledge, which thro' the *Favour* of Heaven and the Royal Indulgence, we enjoy of Chooſing our own *Councellors*, ſhould take heed they be not influenced or biaſs'd by a Party Spirit; but ſhould prefer thoſe in their Choice, who are moſt capable and beſt inclined to ſerve their People: Men of Ability and Fidelity; loyal to their Prince, and faithful to their Country, fearing God and hating Covetouſneſs.

3. Uſe. We may learn hence, *The vaſt Difficulty and Importance of the Office of Civil Rulers*, who are the *Miniſters of God for the good of their People*. They that have taken the Charge of the Government, or are Miniſters therein, have a great Truſt devolved upon 'em. They have a weighty and difficult Work before 'em, who are to manage the publick Affairs for the good of all; eſpecially when a People are *fallen* into Declenſions, and are *rent* by Diviſions. And at the beſt, their Work is attended with ſuch Difficulties, that none need begrutch them the Honour they enjoy on theſe Terms. Thoſe that are moſt fit for Service, are commonly moſt averſe to it; and who, that rightly underſtands the matter, would willingly leave the ſweet Repoſe and Tranquility enjoy'd in a private Life, for the Uneaſineſs which com-

monly attends the publick Cares and Buſineſs; did not mere Duty oblige one to make the exchange?

4. Uſe. *Are the Rulers of a People the Miniſters of God, for their good?* Then we may learn, *that thoſe who, in a good meaſure, anſwer this Character, are to be valued and eſteemed, as great and publick Bleſſings, and we ſhould be thankful to God for 'em, ſhould reverence, and be ſubject to them, and honourably ſupport them.* Theſe are *his Miniſters indeed.* Others have the *Name* or *Title*, and theſe have the *thing ſignified by it.* He is the *Servant*, the *Miniſter* of God, *who is a Terror to thoſe that do evil, and a Praiſe to them that do well*; who beareth the Sword for the Puniſhment of Wickedneſs and Vice; and ſo governs, that the People may live quietly in Godlineſs and Honeſty. The *Order* of the divine Inſtitution is inverted, if the *Power* be turned to the Praiſe of thoſe that do Evil, and becomes a Terror to ſuch as do well; and that none who live juſtly and honeſtly can be quiet under it. Thoſe *Rulers* who do not employ their power aright, but act diſagreeable to their Relation to God, as the Fountain of Juſtice, Mercy and Truth, are not equally deſerving of this Character, or of the Reſpect that is paid them for their works ſake, with thoſe that do. *Good Rulers* are a great Bleſſing; they are therefore compared * to the *light of the Morning*, which chears and refreſhes univerſal Nature. To the lofty and fruitful Mountains and Hills †, which not only over-top the Vallies, but help to make them fruitful. To the Corner-ſtone and Nail ¶, which keep all in ſquare, all in frame. And to living Fountains ††, which with their flowing ſtreams refreſh every Creature. Let Judgment run down as Waters, and Righteouſneſs as

* 2 Sam. 23. 3. † Pſal. 72. 3. ¶ Zech. 10. 4. †† Amos 5. 24.

a mighty Stream. And those who *drink*, who partake of these streams, enjoy the Benefit, the Advantage of a good Government, ought to be *thankfully* to God for it. A good Government, is a divine and heavenly Blessing. *Happy art thou O Land, when thy King, is the Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due season, for Strength and not for Drunkenness*, Eccl. 10. 16. "When the Rulers are generous and active, sober and temperate, and Men of Business, and not Gentlemen of pleasure only." Who aim at the good of of their People, and take the proper steps to make them happy. Such *Princes*, such *Rulers* our Nations have enjoy'd, who have had a succession of some of the best Kings, the best Princes in the late *Reigns*, that ever sway'd the *British Scepter*: Who have *asserted* the *just Rights*, of Mankind in *general*, have been Guardians to the Liberties of *Europe*, as well as of their *own Nations*. Under the Umbrage and Shadow of whose *just* and *mild* Administration, Protestants of all Denominations have sat with great safety and delight. And it was the prayer of all that wish'd well to our Nations, *Let 'em live for ever*. And so they do in the *British Annals*; their Names, their renowned Actions will be had in everlasting Remembrance; so we hope they will in the Person and Royal Issue of his present Majesty, who is in the same Sentiments with his Royal Predecessors, King *WILLIAM*, and King *GEORGE*, of blessed Memory, and has declared from the *Throne*, that the Religion, Laws and Liberties of his Kingdom are most dear to *HIM*, as they were to *Them*. And who has nothing more at *Heart* than the *Good*, the *Prosperity* of the *Nations*, that he may make 'em *easy* and *happy*: And therein he gives us Grounds to hope, that our Liberties and Priviledges here, both civil and sacred, will be precious in his *sight*; and that upon our approving our selves his *Loyal Subjects*,

as we have hitherto, and hope ever ſhall, we ſhall receive *Favour* as well as *Juſtice* from Him. *Let us then Fear God and Honour the King; and not meddle with thoſe who are given to Change.*

And when, by the Favour of God, we have *Rulers* ſet over us, who *aim* at the publick Good, *this* ſhould be a further Obligation upon us to Gratitude. And we ſhould manifeſt our Thankfulneſs to God by our Subjection to them;—— By our Reverence to their Perſons: God has put Honour upon *them*, by making them *his* Vicegerents, and raiſing *them* up to *ſuch* Dignity; and *we* ſhould put Honour upon *them* by paying a Civil Homage to them. We ſhould conſider their Relation to God, and treat them with all that Reſpect and Deference which is due to *their* Character and Station. If *they themſelves* do things unbecoming their *high* Stations, expoſe their Character, and render themſelves Cheap in the Eyes of others; yet *we* muſt not do any thing of that Tendency, with that Deſign. But ſhould on the contrary, hide or cover their Infirmities, and do what we can to keep up their Credit, and the Credit, the Honour of Government thereby, that it mayn't be *trampled* upon by the immoral and prophane. If we do any thing to weaken their Authority, we do but weaken our own Hedge, by which our Lives and Intereſts are preſerved. God has made it our Duty to reverence them, and he will be diſhonoured and diſpleaſed if we do not. Further, *we ſhould be obedient to them. Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher Powers.* Whatever their Character be, yet the juſt Power which they have, muſt be ſubmitted to.

Laſtly. *They ſhould be ſupported according to their Dignity, and enabled to keep up their Poſt, and the Honour of Government.* For this Reaſon it was, (as one ſays) that good *Nehemiah*, in a Time of outward Straits

with

with the People of God, kept up his Table at his own Charge, ſo as might ſuit with the *State* of the Governour, tho' he refuſed the *Bread* of the Governour. He might have made this an excuſe to abate that Expence; but he knew that in this way, the Dignity and Honour of Government is kept up, and that theſe vulgar Encouragements do much ſweeten the Severity of Magiſtracy, and will therefore continue them at his own Charge, rather than be without them. The Equipage, Attendants and Entertainments, and the other Pageantries attending it, are not Enſigns of vain Glory, but the neceſſary Utenſils by which the Worth and Excellency of Magiſtracy is diſcovered to the common People; it being a Language beſt underſtood by the generality. Now to maintain this State, it's neceſſary that Rulers ſhould be honourably ſupported. We muſt give to them their due of Honour and Support. *Render therefore to all their dues: Tribute to whom Tribute is due; Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom; Fear to whom Fear; Honour to whom Honour*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 7 v. Context. And I ſuppoſe there is no one Perſon of *Tho't* in this *Auguſt* Aſſembly, but is in the ſame Sentiments with the Apoſtle on *this Head*.

5. And laſtly. I ſhall conclude with an Addreſs to thoſe of the *civil* and *ſacred Orders*, and to the *Body* of the *People*.

1. Let what has been ſaid, be apply'd in an *Humble Addreſs to His Excellency our Governour and Commander in Chief, the Honourable the Lieutenant Governour and Council, and the Honourable Gentlemen of the Aſſembly*, who have ordered me into the *Desk* at this time, much againſt my Inclination. And will your *Excellency* and *Honours* allow me, as one that deſires to be found faithful, to be your humble Monitor, to put

you

you in Remembrance of what you already know to be your Duty, and which it will be your Intereſt as well as ours, faithfully to diſcharge, in improving your Power, Authority and Influence, to promote the beſt Good of this People; that ſo it may appear, that becauſe God *had a Favour for us, therefore he hath ſet you over us, to do Judgment and Juſtice* *. I have hinted at ſeveral things, which tend to the general Weal: But I ſhall not repeat what has been ſpoken, only ask leave to preſs *one Thing* on your Practice and Care, and that is *Religion*. This is the *one Thing needful* for *Rulers* and *People*. This ſhould then be your *principal* Concern, as that on the promoting of which, our preſent and future Welfare depends. The more Religion prevails, thro' your Influence, the better Grounds ſhall we have to expect the *Favour of God*, and the *Royal Favour* too, in the continuance of our *civil* and *ſacred Priviledges*; the *flouriſhing of Learning*; *Succeſs* in our *Trade* and *Merchandiſe*, *Fiſhery* and *Husbandry*. Then may we hope that our publick Affairs, yet unſettled, will come to a happy Settlement; That a *medium* will be found out, to reduce the exhorbitant prices of things, or the preſent *medium* of Exchange rendred more valuable; at leaſt be made to anſwer the End it was at firſt deſign'd for, to pay and *leſſen* the publick Debts and not *increaſe* them; as alſo to accomodate the Trade of the Province, and not to give Perſons Advantage mutually to oppreſs one another. And that the publick Faith will be kept and preſerved with reſpect thereunto; And we ſhall be enabled to go chearfully thro' the publick Charge, in maintaining Church and State. For our Sins, we have been bro't into difficult Circumſtances; but as Reformation proceeds, and Religion revives, we may rati-

* 2 King. 10. 9.

onally

onally expect our Proſperity will revive with it. *Come, let us return unto the Lord,* (ſays the Prophet ‖) *for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up. After two Days he will revive us, in the third Day he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his ſight.* —— *His going forth is prepared as the Morning, and he ſhall come unto us, as the Rain, as the former and latter Rain, unto the Earth.* Again †, *O Iſrael, return unto the Lord; for thou haſt fallen by thine Iniquity*; and then it follows *, *I will heal their Backſlidings* —— *I will be as the Dew unto Iſrael; He ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his Roots as Lebanon. His Branches ſhall ſpread, and his Beauty ſhall be as the Olive-Tree, and his Smell as Lebanon.* This Change and Alteration in their outward Condition and Circumſtances for the better, depended very much upon the Change of their Manners, or upon their Reformation. And the ſame may be ſaid as to any *other* People, who are under Declenſions, and the Frowns of Heaven therefor: That they may upon their Reformation and the Change of their Courſe and Ways towards God, expect that the Courſe of his Providenee will be chang'd towards them, from adverſe to kind and gracious. This has been long call'd for from this whole People; even, the Reformation of thoſe Sins which have been and ſtill are prevalent among us. The ſame Sins which the *Synod* for Reformation, convened in the Year 1679, 80. tho't to be the procuring Cauſe of God's Judgments then, are ſtill found among us, and as we have been increaſed, ſo have theſe and other Sins prevailed, even the Neglect of God's *publick Worſhip*, deſpiſing God's Ordinances, the profanation of the Lord's Day, Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, Intemperance, Uncleaneſs, Curſing and Swearing; And many other

‖ Hoſ. 6. 1, 2, 3. † Chap. 14. 1. —— 6. * V. 4.

Sins

Sins that might be mentioned. And however it may be as to ſome particular Perſons, who may be reclaimed and reformed by the *Providence* in Conjunction with the *Word of God*, and particularly by the *Earthquake*, which has been ſo awakening and affecting to the *whole Land*, Yet as to the *generality* it is to be feared, that we have loſt thoſe Impreſſions very much, and have not returned to the Lord with our whole Heart; but are ſtill on the declining Hand in Religion; of whom thoſe Words of the Pſalmiſt ſeem to be verified *, *when he ſlew them, then they ſought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their Mouth, and they lied unto him with their Tongues. For their Heart was not right with him, neither were they ſteadfaſt in his Covenant.* And if we grow more ſinful, we may juſtly fear, we ſhall be yet more miſerable. How needful then is it, that our *Honourable Rulers* do exert themſelves, in their Places to ſuppreſs Sin and Prophaneſs; the open and enormous Crimes that are too generally practiſed; That Iniquity which appears boldly may be made to hide it's Head, and the Workers of it, if they be not reclaimed, may be reſtrained and curbed in: that by your bearing a due Teſtimony againſt the Sins of particular Perſons, the Publick may be clear of the Guilt of them. *And the wickedneſs of the Wicked may be upon him, only,* and not on others †. You have the Sword of Juſtice put into your Hands for this very End, which ſhould be uſed for the *Reſtraint and Terror of thoſe that do Evil, for the ſuppreſſing of Iniquity and promoting of Virtue.* Allow me then, to Addreſs you in the Words of *Schechaniah* to *Ezra*. *Ariſe, for this Matter belongeth*

* Pſal. 78, 34, 35, 36, 37. † Ezek. 18, 20.

unto

unto you, we alſo will be with you, be of good Courage, and do it †. If then there can be any thing further done towards Reformation, and for the promotion of Religion and Righteouſneſs, Piety and Peace, we hope you will in your Wiſdom think of it, and do it.

And it is worthy of your ſerious Enquiry, whether there has been enough done to guard the ſanctity of the Sabbath, and to prevent the Diſorders that too many in *Country Towns* are guilty of, in the *Interval* of *divine Service*, and on the *Evenings* after it? Whether there mayn't be ſomething further done to prevent the *growth* of *Intemperance*, which has increaſed ſo much by Yearly Acceſſions, and threatens to deluge the Country? Whether any thing farther may be done to encourage the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and to promote Schools of Learning, which will have a great Influence upon Religion and Reformation? If the Lord is pleas'd, to help you to exert yourſelves in your high and honourable Stations, you may do much towards the furtherance of Righteouſneſs and Peace; the healing of our Breaches and the reſtoring of Paths to dwell in. It lies with you in a great meaſure, to rectify what is amiſs, to number that which is wanting, and to make crooked things ſtrait. To make us *as a City compact together, a City of Righteouſneſs, a faithful City.* And we ſhall not ceaſe to pray for you, that you may have much of God's Preſence with you; *that the wonderful Counſellour, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, would give you Counſel and Might; that the Armsof your Hands may be made ſtrong, by the Hands of the mighty God of Jacob*, and that he would help you to *know* and *do the things which belong to the publick Peace* and *Proſperity.* That a *publick* and *pacifick Spirit* may diffuſe it ſelf,

† Ezra 10. 4.

run thro' and animate the whole general Aſſembly, thro'out the preſent Seſſion, and the preſent Year; and that you may be ready to concur in any things propoſed to you, that may have a Tendency to the general Weal. That the Glory of God and the publick Good may be ever in your *View*, in all your *publick Managements*; and that you may ſtudy the things which make for Peace, and wherewith one may edify another. We wiſh you much of that Wiſdom *which is from above, which is firſt pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.* This is the Bleſſing we wiſh you out of the Houſe of the Lord. *The Lord ſend you Help from his holy hill of Zion.*—— I may continue the Addreſs,

2. *To the Eccleſiaſtical Rulers, who are alſo the Miniſters of God, the Miniſters of Religion, for the Good of their People, the Good of their Souls.* This is the next End of their Miniſtry, and in promoting their Spiritual Good, their Temporal is alſo by that means advanced. We are to put our People on ſeeking the *Kingdom of God* and the *Righteouſneſs* thereof; and this is *the* way to have other things added, and a Bleſſing therewith. We are alſo to put them in Mind, *to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magiſtrates; to exhort them to pray for the King and all in Authority, that we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty under them.*—— But above all, we are as Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, to entreat Men to be reconciled unto God: Even our *Rulers* as well as *others*, whom we are to exhort ſo much the more, as we ſee the Day a haſtening. *Be wiſe now therefore, O ye Kings, be inſtructed ye Judges of the Earth: Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoyce with Trembling. Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little: bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.* We muſt be zealous alſo

alſo in defending the Truths of the everlaſting Goſpel: contending earneſtly for the Faith and Order thereof; and neither ſuffer our ſelves or others to be removed to *another Goſpel.* We ſhould inſiſt on the Foundation Principles of Religion *chiefly*, and inculcate thoſe Truths *eſpecially*, which concern the *Life* and *Power* of Godlineſs. As knowing the *Terrors* of the Lord we ſhould perſwade Men, and lay out our ſelves to promote the Converſion and Salvation of *precious* Souls. It's true our Work is *double* in degenerate Times, but we muſt not be diſcouraged, but muſt cry *a loud and not ſpare; lift up our voice as a Trumpet, and ſhew our People their ſins*, and ſtir them up to Repentance. We can't be ſilent and be innocent or guiltleſs. We muſt bear a due Teſtimony againſt the ſins of the Times and Places we live in, the ſins of *Rulers* and *People.* And by our *Example*, as well as *Doctrine*, condemn the evil Practices of others, and ſhew them the *way* to Happineſs: It is indeed a Time of great Temptation, with Miniſters and People; it becomes us therefore to be the more circumſpect in our Converſation, that we *give no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed*: *But we muſt in all things approve our ſelves the Miniſters of God in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Neceſſities* †. And muſt by no means, be tempted to *deſert* the *Cauſe* of God and his People. But we muſt do *our* Duty to them, tho' they fail in *theirs* to us. *Neceſſity is laid upon us, and wo unto us, if we preach not the Goſpel.* It's our Duty alſo to defend the *Churches Priviledges*, as well as claim the *juſt Power* that belongs to the Presbytery, which was given to Miniſters for Edification and not for Deſtruction. We are *not to Lord it over God's Heritage.* We have *no Dominion over their Faith, but are to be helpers of their Joy.* And we muſt exhort them

† 2 Chron. 6. 3, 4.

to ſtand *faſt in the Liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made 'em free*; as the Apoſtle does his *Galatians* †. Put them on, and lead them in, the Choice of a full ſet of Officers in the Churches, which will be ſo much for the advancing Religion and the facilitating our own Work. And this is that which is directed to by the *Synod* of 1679. in that Article of their Reſult wherein they ſo lament the want of a full ſet of Officers, as a Defect in theſe Churches; To which I refer the Reader *.

Laſtly, *I ſhall Addreſs, the whole Body of this People.* And be *ye* Exhorted, to put to your helping Hand to the good Work, in which our *Honourable Rulers* are engaged, in promoting the publick Good. It becomes every one to be of a *publick Spirit*; and there is none, no not the moſt inconſiderable Perſon, but may do ſomething towards the good of the *Society* he belongs unto; if not otherwiſe, *yet* by wiſhing the publick Proſperity, and praying for *thoſe* in publick Truſt. And indeed they that are beſt qualified & ſpirited to ſerve the Publick, and have the greateſt Advantages to do good, *yet* need the Prayers of others. Let us then bear them upon our Hearts, at the *Throne* of Grace continually, that they may have the divine Aſſiſtance in there *great* and *difficult Work*, and a *Bleſſing* on their *publick Adminiſtrations*. Let us encourage them in *their* Work; and ſay unto *them*, as it is in the *Prophet*. *Be ſtrong O Zerobabel, and all ye ſervants of the Lord; for the Lord is with you while ye be with him.* Let us lay aſide *all* unreaſonable Jealouſies and hard Cenſures of *them*, and put the beſt Conſtruction on their *Words* and *Actions*. Leave it to them to conduct the *publick Affairs*, and when we have Reaſon to think they do *all* for the

† Gal. 5. 1. * Pag. 10, 11.

beſt,

beſt, let us acquieſce in their *Conduct* and be pleas'd with it as the People were with *David*'s: for all that the *King* did, pleaſed all the People †. Let us be *grieved* at the Diviſions among us. *For the Diviſions of Reuben, there were great ſearchings of Heart* §. *Pray for the Peace of our Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love her: For our Brethren and Companions ſake, let us now ſay, Peace be within thee, becauſe of of the Houſe of the Lord our God, we will ſeek thy good.* If the Lord is pleas'd to help us againſt our *Corruptions*, the Cauſe of our *Contentions*; our Pride and Envy, our Murmurings, Jealouſies and Diſcontent; and to give us a ſpirit of Unity and Love; this would allay all our Heats, and heal all our Diviſions, and make up all our Breaches. This would open a *New Scene*, and bring a *New Face* upon all our Affairs: O! let us labour for it, as well as pray for it, by mutual Condeſcentions, Forgiveneſs and the exerciſe of Charity, that covers a multitude of Faults. "This Grace of Charity (as *One* ſays, whoſe Words I ſhall borrow *) would make us to have better Tho'ts one of another, for *Love thinketh no Harm.* And this would not only relieve us againſt the Diſtempers of our Minds, but againſt our outward ſtraits and difficulties, we complain of. Charity would be like the Widow's *Oyl*, that would never *ceaſe runing*, 'till it had filled all the Veſſels. This would pay all our *Debts*, and defray all our *publick Charges*; this would relieve all our diſtreſſed Friends; it would anſwer all the Neceſſities of *Church* and *State*. This would *feed* all our *Poor*, and *cloath* all our *Naked* Brethren, and *ſupport* all our Widows and fatherleſs Ones. It would maintain all our *Miniſters, ſo that they who preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel*; and this would at a more honourable Rate, and without repining afford the *Bread* of the

† 2 Sam. 3. 36. § Judg. 5. 16. * The Rev. Mr. *Hubbard*.

Gover-

Governour. In a Word, what would not Charity do of this kind?

I tell you (ſays *he*) If we could ſet up ſuch a *Bank* of Chriſtian Charity in *New-England*, it would prove a richer Store-Houſe than all the *Spaniſh* Mines, or Banks of *Venice* or *Amſterdam*. This would make ſuch an equal Diſtribution of the things of this Life, thro' the whole Camp of *Iſrael*, that *he who gathered much ſhould have nothing over, and they that gathered little ſhould have no lack.* For this with *Contentment would make Godlineſs the greateſt Gain* to all that traded therein. Then would every *Chriſtian Brother*, Neighbour and Friend aſſiſt and ſtrengthen each other, and Endeavours would be firmly engaged in to promote the *Common Good.*

To Conclude, Let us all labour to *amend our Ways and Doings, which have not been right. Fear God and keep his Commandments, that it may be well with us and our Children*: That we may poſſeſs *this good Land*, and leave it, with the *Religion* and *Liberties* of it, as an Inheritance to our *Children* after us, *for ever, That Glory may dwell in our Land. Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, and walketh in his ways. The Lord ſhall bleſs thee out of Sion, and thou ſhalt ſee the good of Jeruſalem all the Days of thy Life.*

FINIS.

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